

Grocery Outlet to join Big Lots in Tacoma at shopping center | The News Tribune

By Debbie Cockrell

Consider this the comeback of Tahoma Vista Shopping Center.

The center, near the intersection of East 72nd Street and Portland Avenue, has been undergoing a multimillion-dollar makeover by owner PMF Investments of Bellevue [since the departure of Kmart in 2017](#).

The retailer, its original anchor, had been there since 1968.

While other shopping centers nationwide have seen a [slow demise with high-profile retail departures](#) such as Sears, Kmart and Toys ‘R’ Us, Tahoma Vista’s owners and the city decided early on to buck that trend and turn the shopping center around.

Digital Access for only \$0.99

For the most comprehensive local coverage, subscribe today.

At Tahoma Vista, [Big Lots has moved into the space](#) formerly occupied by Kmart. In turn, Grocery Outlet is moving into the previous Big Lots location, with an expected grand opening of the grocer March 14 in the 23,000-square-foot space.

The Big Lots at the center, an example of the retailer’s “store of the future” format, “has been an overwhelming success in its first few weeks since opening,” said Tim Johnson, executive vice president and chief financial officer of Big Lots, in PMF’s news release.

Carol Wolfe with the city’s Economic Development Services told The News Tribune via email that city representatives reached out to PMF as soon as it was known that Kmart was leaving and expressed interest in gaining more retail for the East Side.

“To sum up, we let them know we appreciated their investment in the building, their commitment to filling the space as soon as possible, and we were committed to getting them answers quickly and comprehensively,” she said.

Recent site upgrades, exterior and interior, include “energy efficient HVAC systems, the replacement of parking lot lights with energy-efficient LED lights and interior lighting systems,” according to PMF, which [develops, owns and manages commercial properties in the area](#). Its portfolio also includes Green Firs Towne Center in University Place, home of Trader Joe’s.

PMF also noted in its recent Tahoma Vista announcement that it is “in active negotiations with prospective tenants for the two remaining renovated locations, which total slightly more than 40,000 square feet.”

In addition to Big Lots, the center includes a Taco Bell, Burger King and O’Reilly Auto Parts.

“Revitalizing this property as a wonderful place for the neighborhood to gather and shop is our priority,” said Brian Franklin, president of PMF, in its news release. “Additionally, we’re grateful for the City’s continued investments in the neighborhood, and we hope this project will contribute to that effort.”

The center’s improvements come on the heels of [the recent opening of the Eastside Community Center](#) at Portland Avenue and East 56th Street. PMF collaborated with various local agencies as part of a larger effort to enhance safety at the transit center and shopping areas in the Portland Avenue business corridor.

Wolfe told The News Tribune: “They are very conscientious developers and wanted to know more about the community and priorities. This is the way public and private should work together.”